

BOOK REVIEW

VINAYA GHATE, HEMA SANE, and S.S. RANADE (compilers and editors). 2004. **Focus on Sacred Groves & Ethnobotany**. (ISBN 81-8540502-6, hbk.). Proceedings of the National Seminar on Ethnobotany & Sacred Groves: "Role in Conservation Strategy for India." [Edited by Dr. Vinaya Ghate] Prism Publications, Chembur, Mumbai (India). Distributor: Timely Management Consl.Ser.Put.Ltd., 14/4 Shivpuri, Sion Trombay Road, Chembur, Mumbai 400 071, INDIA. (**Orders:** PH: 91-22-2522 7616 / 2529 5725 FAX: 91-22-2524 2484, ajitn@vsnl.com). Rs.900 (US \$50), 253 pp., photographs, 7.5" × 10" (19 × 25 cm).

Sacred groves are relatively small, some no more than a stand of trees, few larger than an acre of mixed climax vegetation. Within them the locals worship the deities to whom the groves are dedicated and also hold festivities of dance and song in their honor. Because collecting live or fallen plant materials or the cutting of them is taboo, the groves may be the last hold out of plants that could be threatened with extinction as the surrounding forests are cleared for human purposes. The groves are therefore important for conservation.

Dr. V.D. Vaktar, who taught at the University of Pune, was a leader in the study of ethnobotany of western India. The conference and this book commemorate his work. The first part of the book contains articles that Dr. Vaktar (and co-authors) published between 1973 and 1998. Part 2 comprises papers presented at the seminar: studies of botany of various locales, plants important in religious observances, medicinal plants and their applications. The need for conservation of plants in the sacred groves and elsewhere is obvious in all the papers—*Joann Karges (retired TCU Library), Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A.*